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Ocean Conservancy
Start a Sea Change

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Attn: Melissa Miller-Henson

Marine Life Protection Act Initiative
c/o California Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Nomination of Greg Helms of Ocean Conservancy to the Marine Life Protection Act Initiative South Coast Regional Stakeholder Group

Dear Ms. Miller-Henson:

We are writing to nominate Greg Helms as a member of the South Coast Regional Stakeholder Group (RSG) for the California Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA). Mr. Helms and his organization, Ocean Conservancy (OC), have a shared and ongoing commitment to the restoration and protection of marine resources and to achieving these goals through collaboration, local knowledge, and a foundation of sound science.

As members of the Central Coast and North Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Groups, we are well aware of the knowledge and skills necessary for effective participation in the MLPA stakeholder group process. We are confident that Mr. Helms is an excellent candidate and would contribute significantly to the South Coast RSG. Mr. Helms' background, experience, and commitment to working collaboratively with and on behalf of a variety of stakeholders to find science-based solutions to restore and maintain healthy California coastal areas make him particularly well qualified for this position. In addition, as a full-time employee of Ocean Conservancy, Mr. Helms will have the time and resources necessary to commit to the MLPA RSG process and the extensive constituency outreach activities that are necessary for this process to be successful in the long-term. Indeed, both of us are prepared to advise and actively assist Mr. Helms in this role.

We address each of the "Criteria for Selection" listed in the June 23, 2008 Request for Nominations below:

(1) Mr. Helms is knowledgeable about both southern California's marine resources and a broad range of regional marine protection efforts including water quality, fisheries, and habitat protection. Mr. Helms received a bachelor's degree in Political Science with an emphasis on public policy from UC Santa Barbara in 1989, and attended Palos Verdes

and South Torrance High Schools. Mr. Helms has extensive personal knowledge of the Southern California coast and its living resources. A resident of southern California for over 25 years, Mr. Helms has explored the coast from Long Beach to Santa Barbara as well as Catalina and the Channel Islands extensively as an avid sailor. He has also fished and dived extensively throughout Southern California; fishing out of Redondo and San Pedro and diving at sites both along the coast and at the islands. Mr. Helms is a certified survey diver for California ReefCheck, which supports the monitoring of ecological conditions in California waters and has learned marine species identification and survey methodology while helping harness recreational diving enthusiasm to serve the goal of science-based management. These academic and recreational experiences have formed the foundation of Mr. Helms' 20-year professional commitment to coastal resource management and protection.

(2) As noted above, Mr. Helms was raised in the Los Angeles area and has spent his professional career working in Santa Barbara and Ventura County. As the Southern California Program Manager for Ocean Conservancy he is responsible for organizational activities throughout Southern California. He is well able to balance a broad regional perspective with more detailed personal knowledge of the Santa Barbara and Ventura coast and northern Channel Islands.

(3) and (4) Ocean Conservancy is fundamentally committed to the long-term protection of California's coastal and ocean resources and strongly believes that meaningful input from all ocean users is important to developing lasting solutions to management challenges. As a nine year staff member of Ocean Conservancy, Mr. Helms is both committed to this organizational ethic and experienced in practical application of these goals. Prior to working for Ocean Conservancy, Mr. Helms served as Community Affairs Director for a regional conservation organization in Santa Barbara for several years, developing coalitions and programs to engage a wide range of community members in coastal protection. These efforts included collaborative work with the fishing community related to oil and coastal development issues. During this time, Mr. Helms also served on a collaborative stakeholder process involving conservationists and farmers designed to address the impacts of vineyard installation on habitat and watersheds. This process – the Oak Tree Collaborative— produced a highly successful voluntary agreement among wine grape growers to plan for and implement best-practices in conserving resources while expanding the production of grapes in Santa Barbara County's famous wine country.

For the past several years, Mr. Helms has represented conservation interests on the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council. In this capacity, he is currently co-authoring (with fishing representatives) a program of recommendations to monitor and address the effects of climate change on ocean resources and fisheries. Mr. Helms also serves with fishing, agency and SeaGrant representatives on the Channel Island National Marine Sanctuary's Collaborative Marine Research Committee to pursue crucial post-MPA efforts such as collaborative monitoring and integration of MPAs into fishery management.

Mr. Helms represented conservation interests on the Marine Reserves Working Group, which was tasked with developing a Marine Protected Area network for the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary. Although the Channel Islands MPA process was, at times, contentious, Mr. Helms worked hard to balance effective representation of his conservation constituency with social and economic concerns. Mr. Helms looks forward to adopting some of the important 'lessons learned' by Ocean Conservancy during the Channel Islands MPA process and the previous two phases of the MLPA process to the South Coast MLPA effort. In particular, Mr. Helms has a heightened awareness of the value of working across the table and the benefits of cross-interest involvement in development of MPA proposals.

Put simply, successful participation on the South Coast MLPA RSG will require a delicate balance of effective constituent representation, extensive experience and strong collaborative skills in seeking common ground. Greg Helms has demonstrated these skills and is committed to integrating them with local knowledge, fairness and a commitment to implementing the mandate of the Marine Life Protection Act in Southern California.

(5) If selected to serve on the RSG, Mr. Helms and Ocean Conservancy possess significant resources to conduct constituent outreach and develop public awareness of and participation in the MLPA. Over the past twenty years, Mr. Helms has developed an extensive network of contacts throughout Southern California. He is an active participant in dozens of conservation, civic, recreational, and community organizations, and maintains excellent relationships with scientists, agency staff, divers, fishermen, representatives of conservation organizations, and elected and community leaders across California. Mr. Helms is a regular face at dive clubs, Surfrider chapter meetings, beach cleanups and habitat restoration events throughout the region. If selected to serve on the RSG, Ocean Conservancy would help raise awareness about the MLPA by communicating with a wide range of stakeholder organizations through attendance at regular meetings and public outreach events, as well as contributions to organizational newsletters. In addition, Mr. Helms has access to electronic media such as email listserves and the Ocean Conservancy website to help communicate with a broad range of stakeholders.

(6) Ocean Conservancy is deeply familiar with the specific charge of the RSG and is committed to working constructively with other stakeholders to help complete this charge. If selected to serve on the RSG, Mr. Helms would have the added benefit of working closely with Samantha Murray, who has just completed service on the North Central Coast RSG and is available to assist with the South Coast effort.

Mr. Helms can be reached at:

Gregory Helms, Southern California Program Manager
Ocean Conservancy
120 B West Mission Street, Santa Barbara, CA

For these reasons, we are nominating Greg Helms to the North Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Group. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kaitilin Gaffney". The script is cursive and fluid.

Kaitilin Gaffney
Pacific Ecosystem Protection Program Director &
Former Member, Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Group

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Samantha Murray". The script is cursive and fluid.

Samantha Murray
Northern California Program Manager &
Former Member, North Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Group



July 18, 2008

Via email: MLPAComments@resources.ca.gov

Re: Support for nominees to RSG

Dear Ms. Miller-Henson:

The Natural Resources Defense Council would like to offer our support for a number of nominees to the Regional Stakeholder Group (RSG). NRDC is a non-profit conservation group with a long history of advocacy for healthy coast and ocean systems and sustainable fisheries. With over 230,000 California members and activists (1.2 million nationwide), we support an inclusive, transparent process for implementation of the Marine Life Protection Act.

The RSG is an integral part of this process. We applaud your goal of including members who can work collaboratively and communicate with and represent a broad array of interests. The composition should also reflect the fact that a large majority of southern Californians support creation of more marine protected areas, including marine reserves (Public Policy Institute of California, Edge Research).

Whether they come from the conservation community or the business world, each of the RSG candidates listed below brings to the process unique skills, firsthand knowledge of the region's coast and oceans, and rich communication networks as well as a commitment to collaboration and the ability to listen. We support their candidacies because we think they will make a valuable contribution to a collective process of fact finding and developing MPA network recommendations.

Sarah Abramson, *Coastal Resources Director for Heal the Bay*, has a Masters degree in Coastal Marine Resources Management from the Bren School of Environmental Science and Management. She has garnered local knowledge from SCUBA diving in the region and from her stint as a naturalist at Catalina Island Marine Institute. Her work helping local lobster trappers develop a collaborative monitoring program for spiny lobster at the Channel Islands Marine Protected Areas demonstrates her strong collaborative skills and her ability to apply her scientific knowledge to practical challenges.

Kate Hanley, *Director of Operations and Marine Conservation Director, San Diego Coastkeeper*, has a background in marine biology, local knowledge of the San Diego coast and ocean, a regional perspective and a can-do attitude. She has extensive communication networks and outstanding skills in areas of particular value for the MLPA process: in coordination and collaboration (e.g. her work to implement areas of special biological significance) and in community outreach and education (e.g. for the La Jolla Shores Coastal Watershed Management Plan).

Michael Sheehy, *Marine Conservation Coordinator, Santa Barbara Channelkeeper*, has extensive experience communicating marine science and conservation issues to the public and has demonstrated success in cross-sector collaboration and relationship building through his consulting for non-profit and business interests. Mr. Sheehy brings together extensive regional knowledge of the Santa Barbara Channel marine ecosystem and scientific expertise in marine ecology. He has a master's degree in Marine Ecology from UCSB and over eight years experience as a Research Associate and as a Project Manager with the Partnership for Interdisciplinary Studies of Coastal Oceans, at UCSB.

Tom Ford, *Executive Director, Santa Monica Baykeeper*. Mr. Ford's education and work experience spans the Atlantic and Pacific coasts and ranges from fishing to habitat restoration and education, giving him a broad perspective that can benefit the MLPA process. Educated as a biologist and marine ecologist at the University of Rhode Island and UCLA, he has worked as a commercial shell fisherman in Rhode Island, as a biological observer aboard dredges and shrimp boats, and as director of the Santa Monica Baykeeper Kelp Restoration Project. He also serves as a Vice Chair of the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission, and has an extensive network of contacts in the region.

Marcela Gutierrez, *WildCoast*, is a native of the Border Region and resident of the South San Diego Area. She has an undergraduate degree in Business Management, leadership expertise initiating and maintaining strategic business partnerships, and experience working for a seafood distributor. She is 100% bilingual in Spanish and will bring to the RSG strong problem solving skills and business and Latin communication networks

Greg Helms, *Ocean Conservancy*, has lived in the region for over two decades and has worked professionally on marine policy issues for fifteen years. Before OC, he served as community affairs director for Environmental Defense Center, a group that works closely with commercial fishing groups. In addition to following scientific studies of the region's ocean, he has a deep well of direct knowledge from sailing, surfing and SCUBA diving. He learned a great deal from participation in the Channel Islands MPA designation process and the ongoing monitoring program for that network.

We have not attempted to be comprehensive, but rather to focus on a few individuals with whom we have direct experience, and who will bring diverse and valuable skills to the RSG process. We appreciate the opportunity to offer our views to the selection process.

Sincerely,

Karen Garrison

Co-Director, NRDC Ocean Program



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(510) 770 9764 www.cacoastkeeper.org

July 18, 2008

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Re: Support for Southern California Regional Stakeholder Group Candidates

Dear Ms. Miller-Henson:

On behalf of California Coastkeeper Alliance, I am pleased to submit this letter in support of several well-qualified candidates who have been nominated to the Southern California Regional Stakeholder Group. California Coastkeeper Alliance (CCKA) advocates statewide for clean water and a healthy ocean on behalf of itself and California's 12 Waterkeeper organizations spanning the coast from the Oregon border to San Diego. The true bottom-up nature of the Waterkeeper model is unique in California; each of our 12 member groups are autonomous, locally based, individual non-profit organizations that work to protect the health of the waters within their local communities. As such, each Waterkeeper can offer a unique voice and local expertise to the Regional Stakeholder Group.

Under the MLPA framework, the Regional Stakeholder Group (RSG) is the primary entity responsible for initiating proposals for protected area networks. It is imperative that the composition of the RSG reflect that a large majority of Californians support the creation of more marine protected areas, including marine reserves, and that the oceans are a public asset, held in trust for future generations. The daily work of the Waterkeepers is focused on their local watersheds with an emphasis on community outreach and working collaboratively with various stakeholders. This expertise makes each of the four candidates listed below well-suited for the RSG. Moreover, these candidates have first hand knowledge of the marine resources in their geographic area and have a unique perspective to contribute to the creation of marine protected areas. Our top endorsements (in alphabetical order) are:

Tom Ford, Baykeeper & Executive Director, Santa Monica Baykeeper

Mr. Ford's background in ocean issues, education and work experience spans both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts. Mr. Ford was educated as a biologist and marine ecologist at the University of Rhode Island and UCLA. He previously worked as a commercial shell fisherman in Rhode Island, digging clams from Narragansett Bay. He also worked as a biological observer aboard dredges and shrimp boats in Georgia and the Carolinas for the National Marine Fisheries Service and Georgia Department of Natural Resources. Since 1998, Mr. Ford has directed the Santa Monica Baykeeper Kelp Restoration Project, which was part of CCKA's Giant Kelp Restoration Project that spanned Southern California from Santa Barbara to San Diego and included the other Southern California Waterkeepers. Currently Mr. Ford is the Executive Director of the Santa Monica Baykeeper and the President of the Board of CCKA. He serves as a Vice Chair of the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission Governing Board and as an environmental representative on the Los Angeles Long Beach Harbor

Safety Committee. Mr. Ford's knowledge of the kelp forests off Southern California is supported by his studies and his more than 2000 hours on the ocean and over 600 dives in southern California in the past ten years.

Kate Hanley, *Director of Operations and Marine Conservation Director, San Diego Coastkeeper*

Ms. Hanley has been the lead for San Diego Coastkeeper for the last three years on projects related to protection of local Areas of Special Biological Significance (ASBS) and overlapping marine conservation areas at La Jolla Shores. Ms. Hanley was instrumental in developing the community outreach and education portion of the La Jolla Shores Coastal Watershed Management Plan, an ASBS Protection Model developed by San Diego Coastkeeper, Scripps Institution of Oceanography and the City of San Diego. In addition to her strong background in marine biology, she possesses expertise in public outreach and education, and commitment to increasing awareness of water quality and marine conservation issues within the community. Ms. Hanley has proven to be an effective coordinator and effective at considering and representing varying points of view while fostering productive relationships. She will bring a strong, positive energy to the RSG along with extensive knowledge of the San Diego Region.

Ray Hiemstra, *Associate Director of Programs, Orange County Coastkeeper*

As the Associate Director of Programs for Orange County Coastkeeper, Mr. Hiemstra has been working to protect our coast for eight years. Through managing a variety of marine research projects in Newport Bay and Huntington Harbour and work on a restoration project on the Newport Coast, he has been directly involved in documenting marine resource conditions. Mr. Hiemstra's extensive localized knowledge of marine resources in Orange County is balanced with a regional perspective. Recognized as a go-to person in the environmental community in Orange County, he is a member of numerous stakeholder and technical advisory groups, where he is often the only environmental voice. As such, he has developed excellent communication and negotiation skills and has a record of developing innovative solutions to reach consensus with diverse stakeholders. Mr. Hiemstra is a facilitator for the Citizen Watershed Monitors of Orange County and is a regular participant in meetings of the Orange County Coastal Coalition and both the Newport Bay and Aliso Creek Watershed Stakeholder groups.

Michael Sheehy, *Marine Conservation Coordinator, Santa Barbara Channelkeeper*

As the Marine Conservation Coordinator for Santa Barbara Channelkeeper, Mr. Sheehy educates the public on marine conservation efforts and issues relating to the Santa Barbara Channel. Mr. Sheehy brings extensive regional knowledge of the Santa Barbara Channel marine ecosystem and scientific expertise in marine ecology, specifically in areas of ecology critical to ecosystem-based management and the scientific basis for marine protected areas. He holds a master's degree in Marine Ecology from the University of California, Santa Barbara and has more than eight years of experience as a Research Associate with the Marine Science Institute and as a Project Manager with the research consortium, Partnership for Interdisciplinary Studies of Coastal Oceans, at UCSB. Mr. Sheehy has extensive experience in communicating marine science and conservation issues to the public and he has demonstrated success in cross-sector collaboration and relationship building through consulting work for non-profit and business interests. Mr. Sheehy serves on the Board of Iemanya Oceanica, a non-profit organization dedicated to the protection of sharks and rays and their habitats through education and research primarily in Southern California and Mexico.

Additionally, CCKA supports the nomination of people who represent other constituencies, including national and regional conservation groups, divers, scientists, local businesses, and sport and commercial fishermen. In particular, we support the nomination of the following candidates (in alphabetical order):

Sarah Abramson, *Heal the Bay*

Jenn Feinberg, *Natural Resources Defense Council*

Marcela Gutierrez, *WiLDCOAST*

Greg Helms, *Ocean Conservancy*

We have found these people to be constructive and willing to listen as well as represent and involve multiple constituencies. We support their candidacies because they have a wealth of experience and expertise on these issues and we think they will make a valuable contribution to a collective process of fact finding and developing MPA network recommendations.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important decision.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'AH', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Angela Haren
Program Director